

BOOK REVIEWS

Inquérito acerca da Prostituição e Doenças venéreas em Portugal, 1950. By A. Tovar de Lemos. 1953. Pp. 146, 16 figs. Editorial Império, Lisboa.

This work, by the Director of the Social Hygiene Dispensary of Lisbon, is based on answers received from health officers throughout Portugal to inquiries on prostitution and the venereal diseases.

In 1949 legislation was approved (Law 2,036) which will lead eventually to the end of licensed prostitution and makes compulsory both the notification and treatment of cases of infectious venereal disease. Law 2,036 is detailed; it obliges all persons with, or suspected of having, infectious venereal disease to submit to examination and treatment where necessary, and not to expose others to infection. Exemption from examination may be secured by a medical certificate attesting to the absence of venereal disease in an infectious stage, but the sanitary authority has the right to submit the suspect to examination by a specialist or to demand a further certificate from a specialist. Doctors are obliged to instruct their patients suffering from V.D. about the gravity of these diseases, and to warn them about exposing others to infection; they must notify infectious cases to the sanitary authority, but names and addresses are to be given only in the case of habitual prostitutes and defaulters from treatment. Examination to detect V.D. is recommended before marriage, during pregnancy, at child health consultations, and when blood is grouped. Further registrations of prostitutes and the opening of new "houses" are forbidden. "Houses" which contravene public health regulations or which constitute foci of infection are to be closed by the sanitary authority. It is planned to coordinate, on a national scale, the prevention of infectious diseases.

The method of the inquiry on prostitution is outlined. A questionnaire was sent to Health Officers of each council containing questions on the number of prostitutes in each district, medical inspection, whether the "houses" are separate or in designated streets, the number of inmates, police supervision, the estimated numbers of clandestine prostitutes, their places of soliciting, and the measures to control repeated soliciting by minors. The results are summarized for each area in Tables with population figures and maps. In 1940 there were 5,276 registered prostitutes and 485 "houses" compared with 5,079 and 422 in 1950. There were 133 "houses" in Lisbon and six in the Lisbon urban district. Registered prostitution is not a problem except in Lisbon, Porto, Coimbra, and Évora, for it hardly exists outside these areas; the legislation forbidding new recruitment is intended to bring about its gradual disappearance. Clandestine prostitution with its changing forms in modern society is a more difficult problem; most of the registered Lisbon prostitutes began as *clandestinas*.

The correct approach lies through education and the improvement of economic conditions so that women do not become prostitutes. Few prostitutes desire to reform until they cease to earn, and few can liberate themselves from their moral and material disequilibrium. The reformed prostitutes must be given work and a place in normal life; if reform is not accepted with good will it always fails.

The method of the inquiry on V.D. is outlined. The incidence of cases in each area is recorded as "many", "few", or "rare", and may be compared with the incidence of prostitution; some figures are given. Thus, in Mortágua, an area with no significant prostitution, only nine cases of V.D. have been seen in 15 years and nearly all these represent infections acquired elsewhere. The incidence has increased in 37 areas, but is constant or decreasing in the majority. Most councils report a greater number of men than women with venereal disease; in nine areas the reverse is true, but no explanation is advanced for this reversal. There is evidence of reluctance to seek treatment in some areas. Further treatment centres are required in many districts which are listed. Law 2,036 is likely to change the conditions revealed by this inquiry.

The detailed account of the incidence of prostitution throughout Portugal is of greater value than the section on V.D. in which few figures are given. The effects of Law 2,036 on the problem will be interesting to watch.

E. D.

Modern Diagnosis and Treatment of the Minor Venereal Diseases. By Orlando Canizares. 1954. Pp. 131, 19 figs, bibl. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford. (27s. 6d.)

This monograph presents clearly and fully the present state of knowledge regarding the "minor venereal diseases", comprising chancroid, lymphogranuloma venereum, and granuloma inguinale. It does not deal with non-specific urethritis or *Trichomonas vaginalis* infections, or some of the other "minor" conditions commonly dealt with in venereal diseases clinics.

The book is a clear and full exposition of standard methods of diagnosis and treatment: the differential diagnosis is well presented and the value of advances in chemotherapy is clearly expounded. The illustrations are exceptionally good, and the whole format is very attractive. There is an extensive bibliography.

The monograph will be a valuable reference book for those who rarely meet the conditions described. It will be a useful addition to the library of all venereologists, and invaluable to doctors in countries where the diseases described occur frequently and prove troublesome.

R. L.